

DISCOURSE

A G A I N S T

Profane Swearing.

It is a Sin, of all others, Provocative of *Divine Judgment*: 'Tis very noxious to *Human Society*. It often brings the Practiser of it into the most horrible Sin of *Perjury*. *False Swearing* naturally springeth out of *much Swearing*. It disparages him that uses it, and derogates from his *Credit*. 'Tis gross *Rudeness*. And 'tis an insolent *Defiance* of the common Profession, the Religion, the Law of our Country, which disalloweth and condemneth it.

See Dr. *Barrow's* Sermon against rash and vain Swearing.

The SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N:

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DEPOSIT



To the Right Honourable

SIR GERARD CONYERS, Kt.

LORD MAYOR of the City of London.



HIS Discourse offers its Service to your Lordship as the principal Magistrate of this great City; and as you are therefore principally concerned, to suppress those Vices, which would overthrow a City and Kingdom. But besides your high Station, your Lordship's personal Character is such, as encourages me to hope, this will not be an unacceptable Present to you. And the inscribing your Lordship's Name before a Discourse of this Nature, I promise my self will recommend it, (if your

DEDICATION.

Lordship please to favour it) to the reading and Acceptance of others.

WHEN there is occasion to punish profane Swearers, might they be made wiser and better, such Punishments would become really wholesome, and serviceable to the Publick. Probably, by putting something of this Nature into their Hands, such an End might be obtained. For tho' some wicked Wretches, may be got to such a pitch, as to despise both Instruction, and Correction; yet, it is to be hoped, this is the Case only of a Few. As to others, such a Discourse against Swearing, given to them at the time of their Conviction, or put into the hands of others for them, might prove particularly useful. When the Pen and the Sword are thus united, for the Reformation of a Vicious Age, it may justly be expected the Success will be more considerable.

I BEG your Lordship will give me leave to say on this Occasion, that both the Credit of Religion, and the Good of the State, call for vigorous Endeavours

DEDICATION.

vours to stop this growing Impiety of
Profane Swearing.

WHAT Reverence can there be in
using the Name of God in our Prayers,
while Men are accustomed, and allow-
ed, to make light of that Name, and to
abuse it in their common Conversation?
Or what can publick Preaching avail,
in solemnly telling Men of the Danger
of Damnation for their Sins, when
upon every slight Occasion, they are
used to damn one another's Blood, and
Souls, to the Pit of Hell? There is not
a Man who has any Fear of God,
and Concern for Religion, but is daily
wounded, and cut to the Heart, in
bearing these things.

YOUR Lordship cannot but be sen-
sible, that the Power of the Magistrate,
and the Good of the State, call for a
Suppression of this horrid Wickedness.
There will be no securing the Credit of
an Oath, without punishing such as
profane it. To make a common Prac-
tice of Swearing, is that which turns
Oaths into mere Trifles with Men; and
by

DEDICATION.

by this Means the Publick loses all that Security and Advantage, which our Laws suppose to arise from them. The Power of Magistrates, and Princes, will never be rever'd as it ought to be, so long as the Fountain of all Honour, and Power, is treated Vilely and with Contempt.

I will add but one thing more; that nothing in the World would be so effectual, to bring unruly Spirits into Order and Subjection, as a resolute and constant punishing them for this execrable Sin. I am, with great Respect,


My Lord,

Bridgwater-Square

July 6. 1723.

Your Lordship's obedient,

and very humble Servant.



An Account of the LAWS against Swearing.

BY an Act made 21 Jac. I. cap. 20. in the Year 1623, it is declared; "For as much as all profane Swearing and Cursing is forbidden by the Word of GOD, be it therefore enacted by the Authority of the then Parliament, that no Person or Persons should from thenceforth profanely Swear or Curse, upon the Penalty of forfeiting one Shilling to the use of the Poor for every Oath or Curse."

"IF any refuse to pay, upon Conviction, the Money is to be levied by Distress. And in defect of Distress, the Offender is to be set in the Stocks if above twelve Years old, if under that Age he is to be whip'd by the Constable, or by the Parent, or Master if present."

THIS Act was appointed to continue till the next Parliament. And then in the 3 of Charles I. cap. 4. 1627, it was further continued. And another Revo-
lver and Continuation of it was in the same Reign 1640.

BUT in the Year 1694, the 6 and 7 of William III. cap. 11. there was a new Act passed, entitled, an Act for the more effectual suppressing Profane Cursing, and Swearing. Wherein it is appointed, "That any Person or Persons who should Swear or Curse, in the Presence, or Hearing of any Justice of Peace, Mayor, Bailiff, or other head Officer; or should be convicted before any of these, by the Oath of one Witness (provided, the Information be within ten Days after the Offence committed)"

An Account of the Laws, &c.

“Use of the Poor the respective Sums after men-
“tioned: that is to say, every Servant, Day La-
“bourer, common Soldier, and common Seaman,
“is, for every Offence, to pay one Shilling. Every
“other Person is to pay two Shillings. And, if
“after Conviction, such Persons offend a second
“Time, they are to pay double. And if a third
“Time, treble to what was paid for the first Of-
“fence.

“THE Money is to be levied by Distresses. And
“in defect of Distresses, the Offender is to be set in
“the Stocks, if above fifteen. If under that Age
“to be whip'd by the Constable, or by the Parent,
“Guardian, or Master of such Offender in the pre-
“sence of the Constable.

“MAGISTRATES that wilfully and knowingly
“omit their Duty in the Execution of this Act, are
“to forfeit five Pounds: the one Moiety to the use
“of the Informer, as he recovered by Suit, in any
“of his Majesty's Courts of Westminster.

BUT “if any Action or Suit be commenced against
“any Person, for doing, or causing to be done
“any thing in pursuance of this Act, treble Costs
“shall be allowed to such in Defence of themselves.

“THIS Act is appointed to be read in Churches
“four Times every Year, immediately after Morn-
“ing Prayer.”

“BUT if it be not as this, were it duly executed,
“would soon bring Men to bear an Oath: or it would
“lessen the Poor's Rates, which are now grown so great
“a Burden: all Forfeitures upon Conviction of Swear-
“ing being for the use of the Poor.”

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DISCOURSE

AGAINST

Profane Swearing.

JAMES V. 12. former part.

*But above all things, my Brethren,
swear not—*

INTRODUCTION.

THIS Epistle of St. James was written, to warn the Jews of those grievous calamities and desolations, that were just at the door. As in ver. 9th of this chapter. And, hereupon, to encourage those that were good to be humble and patient, and to hold fast their integrity even to the end. And if it might

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be,

be, our Apostle endeavours to reclaim the *wicked* and profane, that their iniquities might not prove their ruin. Amongst other crying Sins, which he warns them to avoid and forsake, He insists in an especial manner on that of *Profane Swearing*. *Above all things, my brethren, swear not.*

IT may be read, *before all things* ; (*πρὸ πάντων*;) as if it had been said, don't fall in with that wicked custom of many, *before everything they say*, to put an *Oath*. And thus all *customary needless swearing* is forbidden here, as it is all along in Scripture condemned, for a very grievous Sin.

IT may also on some accounts be read, *above all things* swear not ; (as I shall shew hereafter :) But while St. James would have this minded *above* other things, how many are there that mind this the *least* of all things !

SOME have thought these words are not here directed to *Christians*, but to the *Jews*, with whom profane swearing was very common ; because this Epistle is inscrib'd, in general, to the *twelve Tribes scattered abroad*. Swearing can hardly be supposed one of the spots of God's Children ; since Peter, when he was charged with being a *Disciple* of CHRIST, thought he could not more effectually take off that suspicion, than by *curseing* and *swearing* ; it being well known of the Disciples of JESUS, that they durst not *allow themselves* in this sin. But possibly some of the looser sort of those who were called *Christians* might fall into this common and prevailing sin, as well as other evils complain'd of in this *Epistle*. A vice this is, that has most scandalously prevail'd in this *city*, and *nation*, notwithstanding the *Christian* name is named upon us. How many are there that professedly glory in this name, whose ill tongues, and ill lives, are a discredit, and contradiction to it ?

SWEARING

SWEARING is a most vile daring sin, and what will by no means be excused. Mens being betrayed into it by provocations, or by their own passions, will not be admitted as a sufficient Plea for so heinous an Iniquity. God will not hold him guiltless, that takes his name in vain, let the pretence for it be what it will. Because of swearing, says the Prophet of old, the land mourneth, Jer. xxiii. 10. And the Apostle James in the words I have read, seems more especially concerned to possess Christians with a fear and dread of this sin. Above all things, my brethren, swear not. From which words I shall endeavour to offer what I hope through the Blessing of God may be serviceable to correct this provoking and abounding sin.

THEY are wretched Interpreters of Scripture, that understand this Text, as if it condemned necessary oaths for ending of strife; since (as a known Expositor observes,) 'tis but to confirm such oaths, by preserving the due reverence of them. But all profane customary swearing, though it be by the Creatures; and all false swearing upon any solemn and just occasion, by God himself, must be look'd upon as amongst those evils and abominations that cry to heaven for vengeance.

WE should therefore be concerned not only to avoid such a sin our selves, but to do all that lies in our power for preventing and correcting it in others. In order to this, I would shew,

I. THE Greatness of the sin of Profane swearing, and the evils to which it exposes men.

2. ANSWER some excuses that common swearers offer for themselves.

3. LAY down some directions for dealing with profane swearers, and for enabling them, who are desirous so to do, to avoid and to leave off this sin.

I. LET me shew you the greatness of the sin of Profane Swearing, and the Evils to which it exposes Men. And here will you seriously consider the following things.

I. THINK how impious it is, to bring so sacred a thing as an oath into contempt.

SOME have imagined that this place of St. James, and those words of our Saviour, *Matt. v. 34.* forbid all taking of Oaths: But, for their explication, let it be consider'd; there were three very corrupt opinions, or traditions, amongst the Jews, which are practised upon by too many amongst Christians. (1.) The Scribes and Pharisees taught, that there was no harm in swearing by the creatures; but whenever they had a mind to strengthen what they said by such forms of speaking, they might swear by the Heavens, or the Earth, or Jerusalem, or the Temple, or the like. (2.) They farther very mischievously taught, that those oaths, which did not make express mention of the name of GOD, were not binding. So our Saviour charges them, *Matt. xxiii. 16.* with teaching the people, that *whosoever sware by the Temple it was nothing.* But our blessed Lord tells them, that if such kind of oaths were rightly consider'd, swearing by the Temple would be found the same thing, as swearing by Him that dwelleth therein; and swearing by heaven, was a swearing by the throne of God, and Him that sitteth thereon. (3.) They also propagated this corrupt notion of Oaths, that even swearing by the name of God was not a sin, provided they swore what was true. Now in opposition to these traditions, and doctrines concerning Oaths, our Saviour (in *Mat. v. 34.*) says, *Swear not at all:* That is, not at all by the Creature, as he himself there-

there explains it: And not at all *by the Creator himself in common conversation.* In this sense it is that St. James says in the Text, *Above all things, my Brethren, swear not.* Don't give way to *petty Oaths*; and don't needlessly and profanely use the *name of God* in any part of your conversation. Let it be a great occasion, a just occasion, a necessary occasion, whenever you swear by the *name of God*: For if you swear in common conversation, you will hereby throw contempt upon the name and authority of the *Lord Jehovah*, and make one of the most sacred things in the world, [an Oath,] become insignificant and contemptible.

BUT now, that Oaths may be taken on some occasions, it appears fully, in that an Oath is a part of *Worship* or *Homage*, and therefore joined with Fear and Service, *Deut. vi. 13. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.* This we find was not only required upon great and solemn occasions in the *Old Testament*, but likewise practised in the *New.* 2 *Cor. i. 23.* St. Paul calls God for a *record.* As also, *Phil. i. 8.* And in *Revel. x. 6.* the *Angel* that stood upon the Sea, and upon the Earth, is said to *lift up his hand, and swear by him that liveth for ever and ever.* These Passages, with others that might be mentioned, plainly shew that Oaths may be used upon very great and solemn occasions, but not otherwise.

FOR men, therefore, to make swearing by the *name of God* a common thing, is to desecrate one of the most awful Institutions in the world. By trifling with the *name of God*, and making use of it upon every occasion, they bring that sacred name into contempt; and render it of no use at those times, when all should stand in awe of it, and make solemn appeals to it. Hence it is that when they themselves come to be in affliction and distress,

distress, that name which should be a *strong Tower* to them, will afford them no relief and comfort. They have so accustomed themselves to slight it, and to make it of no esteem, that they have no heart to apply to it. Perhaps it may fill them with terror, if they come to be sensible how vilely and basely they have treated it. A man might as well take the *sacred Elements* of Bread and Wine from a *Communion-Table*, and trample them with disdain under his feet; as take the *holy and reverent Name* of God, in a profane and wicked manner, into his Lips, and upon every loose occasion to throw out *oaths and curses*.

2. *THINK* how directly this sin of Swearing contradicts the Profession of being Christians, and what injury it does to the Christian name in the World.

CHRISTIANITY teaches us to be so just, and sincere, and true in all our conversation, that a bare asserting or denying things may be sufficient: So the latter part of the verse, where the Text is, runs; *Let your yea be yea, and your nay nay, lest ye fall into condemnation.* That is, let it suffice you to affirm or deny a thing, as there is occasion; and be sure to stand to your word, and be true to it, so as to give no occasion for your being suspected of falsehood; and then you will be kept from the condemnation of backing what you say with rash oaths, and from profaning the name of God to justify your selves. Now after this is made a part of our Religion, and a necessary part of the Character of a Christian; (as by our Saviour himself it is, in the vth of *Matthew* above quoted, as well as by *St. James*;) how can any man take a more effectual course, to shew he is no disciple of Christ, than by cursing and swearing? Thus *St. Peter* (as has been hinted already) when he denied Christ, thought

of Profane Swearing.

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thought it would sufficiently free him from all *suspicion* of being one of his followers, to *curse* and to *swear*. After this he concluded, he should no more be accounted a disciple of *Jesus* in that company. So directly does profane swearing prove, that men are not *real* Christians, whatever they may call themselves.

FOR common swearers to frequent the *Christian Assemblies*, and to go under the name of *Christians*, is a very great prejudice to Christianity amongst Infidels. The civilized *Heathens* used the names of their Gods with greater reverence than our *swearing Christians* do. The name of our LORD JESUS is despised and blasphemed amongst the *Turks*, on this very account as much as any thing, that such *horrid Oaths* and *Imprecations* are used by such as call themselves Christians. Swearing is most dishonourable to our profession, 'tis a flat contradiction to it, and tends to destroy, instead of propagating it in the world.

3. 'TIS a Sin that God will not suffer to go unpunish'd.

THE third Commandment expressly says, *the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain, Exod. xx. 7.* The breakers of this commandment shall not escape the judgment of GOD; though they may escape punishment from men. This sin speaks such an *enmity* to GOD in the hearts of men, that his own glory and honour necessarily requires the punishment of it. *Ps. cxxxix. 20. Thine Enemies take thy name in vain.* Immediate Judgments do not indeed commonly fall upon such; though in some cases it has been so, that men have actually been *struck dead* with oaths and blasphemies in their mouths. But he certainly shewed himself an *hasty* passionate man, who turned *Atheist*, because a Thunderbolt from Heaven did not strike dead

dead a false and profane swearer, that *swore him out of his right*. God may suffer a profane wretch to go on in his wickedness for some time, but at last he will certainly *set his sins in order* before his face : And the more his account is swell'd, by being long spared, the more dreadful will his confusion be, and the heavier his condemnation at last.

OUR Saviour tells us, that *every idle word which men speak*, (every loose vain way of talking concerning GOD and religion, and all fruitless sinful discourse) they shall give an account of in the day of judgment, *Matt. xii. 36.* And therefore much more shall they give an account of their Oaths and Blasphemies. Now let me put the case, That a profane swearer was sure he should have all his oaths *set down in all companies* where he should come ; and that he must suffer the penalty which the *Laws* of our Land appoint, that is, be obliged to pay a *Shilling* for every Oath : And suppose the score daily running on for twenty, thirty, forty years ; but that the *whole sum* of what his oaths amounted to should certainly be demanded of him, one time or other ; would not this be a restraint upon him ? — Suppose farther ; when the demand should come to be made, he *not being able to pay* for the millions of oaths he had sworn, he was then to be condemned to some *exquisite torments*, and to end his life with serpents, toads, and the most loathsome creatures, in a prison or a dungeon ; would not this make a man conceive very dreadful things of the sin of swearing ? And dost thou consider, oh man, that the *invisible* GOD is recording all thine *Oaths* and *Blasphemies*, and though he may spare thee a long time, that he will at last call thee to a *strict account*, and deliver thee to *Devils*, those most dreadful Executioners, till thou shalt pay the very uttermost farthing ? God will not hold him guiltless, that takes his name in vain.

4. CONSIDER that the Sin of Swearing has of all others the least temptation to it, and therefore there is the greater guilt and wickedness in committing it.

OTHER sins have something to recommend them, and to draw and excite men to the commission of them; either Gain, or Pleasure, or Reputation, or something that a man proposes to himself by them: But in profane swearing there can be no pretence to any of these. 'Tis owing to a fearlessness of the Almighty, and is inspired only by pride or passion, and an horrible audaciousness and impudence of spirit. Our old famous Poet Herbert writes very seriously to this purpose,

*His name, who made thy mouth, take not in vain :
It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse :
Lust and Wine plead pleasure, Avarice pleads gain ;
But the cheap swearer thro' his open sluice
Lets his soul run for nought, as little fearing.
Were I an Epicure, I could hate swearing.
And then he very well adds,
The cheapest sins most dearly punish'd are ;
Because to shun them is so cheap. —*

HENCE it is that one of our Divines observes, "swearing is worse than Epicurism." There is something more bestial and brutish, indeed, in irregular and excessive gratifications of the bodily appetites; but there is something more bellish and Diabolical, in profaning and blaspheming the name of God. That Text lies strong against swearers, *Let them be ashamed (or confounded) that transgress, without cause, Ps. xxv. 3.* Sooner or later such causeless offenders shall be confounded utterly.

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5. CONSIDER that the Sin of Swearing is the most foolish of all others, and loses the very Ends it aims at.

'TIS commonly an Indication of an empty unfurnished mind, that does not know how to produce any thing in conversation, that shall have weight or truth enough in it to gain regard. Oaths are thrown in to fill up the sentences, that would otherwise be *wofully trifling* and silly; or to give credit to some story that is related, or to something that is asserted, which otherwise men suspect would hardly be believed; or perhaps the swearer thinks that the sound of an oath has something *great* and *bold* in it, and he had rather be esteem'd *bold* than *wise*. But such a *foolish sin* is swearing, that it does not only propose Ends mean and *foolish* in themselves, but it likewise loses *those very ends* which it does propose.

INSTEAD of making silly and impertinent Talk appear more considerable, it really makes it odious and abominable. A man that talks weakly and foolishly may not perhaps be much esteem'd or minded; but the adding oaths to his weak talk, make him *abhor'd* by every serious person, and commonly *press'd* the harder, and more questioned by men that have any ends to serve upon him, or that can divert themselves by provoking him.

AGAIN, the swearer instead of gaining credit to the things he asserts, or relates, makes himself appear so rash, and one of so little conscience in his regards to God, by the frequent use of oaths, that there is no judicious person will believe he makes conscience of speaking truth to men, and keeping to what is just and right. If a man be suspected of breaking the IXth Commandment by *lying* or *false witnessing* of things; to hear him break the III^d Commandment by swearing and taking God's name in vain, will be far from altering any one's ill opinion

opinion of him: Unless he should meet with persons so foolish as to think, while he makes nothing of the III^d Commandment, that he yet fears to break any *other*; and thus will take the breach of one command, for a *security* that he will not break another. Such is the folly of proposing to gain credit or belief, by mens using themselves to swear and profane the name of G o d.

A N D then as to the swearer's chusing to be accounted a *Bold man*, and a man of Courage, rather than a *Wise man*, he is horribly foolish to take *this way* of shewing his Boldness: For this will either prove him a *mad man*, or (what he is afraid of being thought) a *Coward*. If a man despise or profane the name of that Being who is able to *strike him dead*, and who will sooner or later take vengeance upon him for such impiety, only to shew himself bold amongst *those that dare not thus dishonour their Maker*; This is only to shew himself horribly adventurous, and to act the part of a *disfranchised* man, in wounding and exposing himself to misery for no body knows what. On the other hand, if he becomes a swearer to gain the regards only of *those who are daringly bold and wicked this way* as well as himself, and that he is afraid of losing the friendship of his swearing acquaintance, or of being *beset*^d, *reproach*^d, and ill-treated by them, if he should not swear as They do; then he is really a *Coward*, let him put on never so much of the appearance of Courage. Take it which way one will, the folly of swearing is so great, that it cannot so much as secure the ends it *pretends* to aim at, although these in themselves are very *low and weak* too.

6. THIS sin, when it generally prevails, brings *temporal Judgments and Calamities on a people*.

OUTWARD Punishments were appointed by the Law not only to Swearers, but to those that heard any Oath or Blasphemy uttered against God; and did not immediately discover it, that a stop might be put to such Impiety. *Levit. v. 1. If a soul sin, and hear the Voice of swearing, and is a witness whether he hath seen or known of it; [whether he has been present himself, or certainly inform'd by those that have;] if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his Iniquity.* The Punishment due to the Swearer, or Blasphemer, shall be born by Him. If therefore, this sin prevail so as that there is none to utter and to tell it, when they hear the voice of swearing, Punishment must certainly come upon such a People.

HENCE it is that the Prophet *Zechariab* speaking of the *Curse* that should go over the face of the Earth, and the *Judgments* that *God* would execute in the sight of all, says, *Every one that sweareth shall be cut off.* i. e. according to the Threatnings of *God's Law* on that side, or part of it, which denounces *Judgments* on those that sin against the commandments of the first Table. *Zech. v. 3, 4.* See also *Zeph. i. 5, 6.* and *Hosea iv. 2, 3.*

LET Us now, of this city and nation, bring this to our selves. What reason have we to tremble because of *God's Judgments*, if some care be not taken, and some more than ordinary zeal excited, to check this growing *Evil* amongst us? What place of concourse can we now come into, or what streets can we walk, and not meet with the most execrable Oaths and Curses? I wish to *God* that every *Magistrate* in this City, and throughout this Kingdom, might be animated to do his Duty in correcting and punishing this Vice. One would think, that as ever they expect their name and office should be honoured, they should take care that the veneration due to the name of *God* should be

be preserved. They that honour God, He will honour; but they that despise him, shall be lightly esteem'd. I wish all that have any fear of God upon their own spirits, and any sense of Religion, would stand up for God against these despisers of his Name, his Authority, and his Law. A serious Writer formerly bewailing the sad state of this Kingdom, says, " Though the multitude and variety of our sins be so great, that 'tis a puzzling task to determine to what particular crimes our calamities are due, yet certainly our oaths are too considerable an accession to our sins, not to infuse a suitable proportion of gall and wormwood into the bitter cup, these gasping nations drink so deeply of; and whatsoever may feather those fatal arrows that destroy these nations, I am confident our oaths do strangely point and sharpen them." Let every man then that loves and honours his God, plead his cause against the profaners and despisers of his name. Let every one that loves his own Soul, and values its peace and salvation, avoid this sin of swearing above all others. And let every one that loves his Country, do what he can to prevent the ruin of it, by discountenancing and testifying against that sin, which makes a land mourn. And let every serious Christian, that can do no more, at least mourn in secret for the oaths he hears in publick places, and in the open streets. And let us all earnestly plead with God to appear, when men are thus making void his Laws.

I DOUBT there are some people, who through the commonness of this sin, and their being daily inured to it, grow easy with it, and insensible of our common danger. But would you think a pestilence the less dangerous, because it should come to be generally dispersed? Or can you think a nation less offensive to Heaven for its being generally corrupted?

14 *The Common Swearer's*

corrupted? Or rather, is it not then ripest for judgments, and nearest to them? It is with guilty Kingdoms as with leaking Boats (to use the comparison of a very elegant pen) where the greater the number of Passengers is, the more speedily the Vessel sinks. When G o d looks down from Heaven and sees that *all have corrupted their way*, then is his time to punish such a nation and people.

II. I P R O C E E D now to answer some *Excuses* which Profane Swearers make for themselves.

W H A T I have to offer under this head will I hope be serviceable in these two respects; namely, to persuade those, who have been *accustomed* to this sin, to forsake it, when I shall make it appear that their sin is without excuse; and to shew those who are *not guilty* of this sin *themselves*, how to deal with *such as are*.

Objection 1. I T is alledg'd by some, that they mean no *harm* when they swear; and that it is rather *owing to custom* than to any thing of a profane temper, that they are guilty of this sin. Such oaths they flatter themselves are no great sins, but what a merciful G o d will overlook and forgive.

Answer. This plea makes the sin *greater*, instead of excusing it, to say that their swearing is owing to *Custom*. If a man was accused for *stealing*, would any one think it a good plea before the Judge for such a man to say, he had been so *used to Thieving*, that he knew not how to quit it? A man had as good plead use and custom for breaking *One Commandment*, as *another*. When sins thus become *habitual*, they are in the sight of G o d the more abominable, instead of being more excuseable.

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*Weak is th' Excuse, that is on Custom built:
Use may increase, but lessens not the guilt.*

BUT when you do swear, you say, perhaps, *God forgive me that I should swear so*, or something of that nature, and this shews that it does not proceed from a *wicked temper*; therefore you think God will be merciful to you, and pardon this frailty of yours.

To this I reply; that your crying *God forgive me* may be as customary a thing with you, as your swearing; and though you use such words, yet you do not *heartily* desire to be forgiven. If a Robber on the high-way should only plead for a pardon, that he might have licence to rob and murder again; and would not accept of a pardon upon those terms, that he should *never* commit a Robbery more, nor do another act of injustice; would any one think this man had a sense of Forgiveness, or any prevailing desire of it? So the swearer that customarily, and at times, cries *God forgive me*, but yet means only to pass the thing off for the present, that he may *repeat it* the first occasion again, certainly has no just sense of pardon and forgiveness. As he pretends that in swearing he means no *barm*, so neither in forgiveness does he mean any great good; but the one must pass for words of course, as well as the other: Only his sin becomes aggravated in this respect, that his oaths throw contempt upon the *Majesty* of Heaven, and his manner of asking forgiveness throws contempt upon the *Mercy* of Heaven at the same time. And what a woful way is this of men's excusing themselves, if they would seriously think of it! To abuse the name of God, and then ask his pardon; and then abuse him again, and then cry mercy; thus to bring both his name and his mercy into contempt!

You still urge, you mean so *little barm* that really you do not know you swear, when others tell you of it;
by

by this you are sure that you intend nothing ill in it.——A sad symptom (as Mr. *Boyle* observes) a *desperate case* in the Judgment of Physicians, when the Patient voids excrements, and knows not when he does it. You will allow the comparison, when I add, that nothing can proceed from men *more loathsome* and execrable than Oaths and Curses.

As to *having no Evil intention*: This is a plea, that with wise and considerate persons can avail nothing. 'Tis the joint sentiment both of *Moralists* and *Divines*, that no *goodness* of the *Intent* can justify a thing in its *own nature evil*. And if a *good intent* will not justify an ill action, much less can a pretence of meaning *no harm*, at all excuse you. Our *Actions* may provoke Heaven as well as our *Intentions*: And if we say and do things which we know God has an aversion to, 'tis to add to the provocation, to pretend we do not *design* to displease or throw contempt upon him.

Obj. 2. But some plead, that they do not *swear often*: It is but *now and then* upon some *extraordinary provocations* that they are guilty of this sin; and others about them they hear, that swear much *oftner*, and much *worse* than they do.

Ans. You don't swear often: But may not *one* such instance of *daring impiety* be enough to condemn you? You now and then profane and abuse the name of God, but will God hold you *guiltless*, think you, only because you are *not so guilty* as others, when you your selves acknowledge you are *guilty now and then*? You are not *so sick* as some that are in the greatest agonies and gasping their last, but you are ill of the *same mortal distemper*, and is this a state to content your selves in? Some are *full* of wounds, but you have only *a few*; however your *few* may occasion your *bleeding to death*

death as well as their many. And to say that there are a *multitude* about you that swear much *worse*, and are more guilty of this sin than you, is only to say that there are some who deserve a *better* place in Hell than your selves; but still Hell and Vengeance is what *you* must expect from the Almighty as well as *they*.

BUT you do not think swearing now and then, as you do, can be your damnation and ruin, because you do not find that your spirits have any such *terrors* or apprehensions about it. Alas for you, are there not many that die of *Letbargies*, as well as of raging Fevers? May not your insensibility of your danger be rather a *symptom* of your *approaching Death*, than a sign of its being well with you? *There is a Generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness*, Prov. xxx. 12.

BUT you'll say, why don't I take notice of that part of your plea, that 'tis only *upon extraordinary Provocations* you swear, and in such cases where *flesh and blood* can't bear the things that you meet with. That is, *flesh and blood* is first enflamed and hurried into *sinful passions*, and then you vent these in *oaths* and *sinful words*. And thus you would make *one* sin an excuse for *another*, when by adding both together you only declare your selves *doubly guilty*. Have not other men met with as great provocations as you, when they have been abused in their *good names*, spoiled of their *goods*, and at last perhaps *barbarously used* and put to exquisite torments; and yet they never curs'd or swore, but *blest* God, and *prayed* for *man*, in the midst of all this ill treatment? Will you pretend that your being so *grievously angry* as to *curse* and *swear*, will excuse your breach of that apostolical precept, *Be angry and sin not?* Eph. iv. 26. No; your *intemperate anger* is a great crime in the sight

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of God, and your *oaths* and *curses* make it still greater.

BESIDES; your passionate swearing is not the way to *remove* or *remedy* any of those evils that give you such disturbance. Because others provoke and offend *you*, you will vilify the name of your *maker*, and provoke and offend him; and so instead of securing his favour and merciful protection, to remove your uneasinesses, and to keep off from you the things that disquiet you, he leaves you to continual restless passions, and to the occasions of exciting them by the perpetual mistakes or mismanagements of such as are about you. If you never cease sin, till you have *nothing* in the world to *provoke* you to it, 'tis likely to be your *final ruin*.

Obj. 3. It is pretended by some persons, that if they do not *swear* at those about them, or those under them, they are *not minded* by them, or at least that things are not done so dispatchfully, and carefully, and diligently as they would have them to be; and they often find that swearing is necessary in order to their being believ'd.

Ans. A *steady conduct*, and a constant regard to *Truth* in all you say, will soon bring those about you to take more notice of you, and to have more respect for you, than *swearing at them* will do. For you to break God's commands, in order to make others obey *your* commands, is a method that can't long succeed. In the case of *servants*, if you have such as will be made attentive to you, and active for you *only by swearing*, you should consult your own ease and happiness so much as to *change* them for those that have better *Sense*, and better *Wills*. But common reasoning methinks should instruct you thus far, that to teach *children*
or

or *servants* to make light of God's commands and of his threatnings (as the III^d Commandment has a peculiar threatning annex'd to it) will make them by degrees to slight *your* commands, and all *your* anger and resentments too. A great deal of that contempt which is now poured upon Superiors, is owing to their rash and passionate swearing. For let Inferiors once learn to swear as their Superiors do, and then oaths come to be as little regarded as any thing; and if this be made a mark of greatness and authority, *every wretch*, that can but swear as roundly and profanely as a *person of Figure*, presently imagines he looks as great as the best of them. Where there is *real power* and authority, there can be no need of an oath to procure regard; and where there is *no just authority* or power over another, swearing makes a man appear very contemptible, and only declares him an impotent Hector, and a profane noisy Bustler and Pretender: a would-be-something, which he is not, and an Insister upon those regards from others which no courtesy can incline them to give, and of which his swearing and profaneness declare him utterly unworthy.

AND then, He, that in common conversation swears, because he imagines he should not be *believed* without an Oath, judges very wrong of *others*, and really exposes *himself* to much greater suspicion of falshood. Why should the swearer take up an opinion of any that he converses with, that they are so uncharitable as to give no credit to him without swearing? Why should he make Them the occasion and reason for his sin, who never discovered any thing of that suspicious, distrustful, incredulous temper that he takes them to be of? A more generous opinion of others, would make profane swearing to attest things in common conversation a perfectly *needleless* thing; nay, it really

appears to be an *highly affronting* thing, and that even to those you speak to, as well as to God, to conceive they are so distrustful, or so ill-natur'd, as to take nothing that comes from you to be true without being sworn to.

BUT here you'll give me leave to tell you, that wise and good men do really the *less* credit you, when they hear you swear: For they conclude 'tis your *consciousness* of Falshood in your selves, that makes you think an Oath needful. And I dare say, your swearing Companions lay as *little stress* upon Oaths, as they would do upon any other words and expressions. So that it can't be pretended, if things are duly considered, that swearing in common conversation gives any additional credit or belief to what men say.

'Tis an observation of a Person of Figure upon this head of Oaths, "That for any man to be known to *make conscience* of an oath, will give him more credit, than the swearing a *thousand* Oaths will do: It being a visible and remarkable judgment of the offended Deity upon Oaths, that the *Number of them* discredits those truths of which they would persuade you." Suppose a Tradesman should be forced to give *Bond* for every little sum of money he owes or borrows, when others could have the like sums or greater upon their *bare word* or *note*; would you think it for the credit of such a Tradesman that he is come to this pass? As little does it prove any man's truth, to say every thing *upon oath*, which others need only to attest in *plain words*.

Obj. 4. BUT perhaps some will say, that they only swear to what *is true*, and in this they are so careful, that those who are acquainted with them, may then certainly depend upon any thing they say, when they swear to it.

Ans.

Ans. 'Tis a pity if the thing you speak be true, that you should give so much reason to suspect it of being false, as, the Answer to the former Objection shews, common swearing does. Certain it is, that no truth, which you deliver in common conversation, is to be supported with an oath: But your *Yes* must be *Yes*, and your *Nay* *Nay*; your affirming things, and denying them, must be such as to appear firm and steady to what you say. If there be need to affirm a thing twice, and to add one *yes* to another; do so: Or if there be need to deny it twice, and to add one *no* to another; do this: But our Saviour expressly says, that *whatsoever is more than this, cometh of evil*, and is therefore condemned.

Obj. 5. 'Tis further urged by way of Excuse amongst some swearers, that they do not use the name of God, and profane that; nor dare they swear those horrid oaths that some do, by *Christ's Wounds and Blood*; and the like; they only use such words as look like oaths to others, and that only when they are in such sort of Company, that they should be despised if they did not use something of such a nature: Or they only swear by their *Faith*, or *Truth*, or by some Creature: And therefore they are not guilty of breaking the III^d Commandment, which forbids only a *taking* the awful name of God in vain.

Ans. I T is a cowardly and childish evasion, to comply with swearing company in using words so like theirs, as that they may think you can speak their language, and at the same time to think you can avoid the guilt of displeasing God. He looks into your thoughts, and knows with what *Intention* you utter those words. You intend that

others should *take them* for oaths, and will not that intention be laid to your charge as a sin? And if you use any kind of Oaths, though ever so small, as you think, to confirm what you say, and to gain the *same regards* which others expect by their more dreadful oaths, you are in a lower degree guilty of their sin. In this you pour contempt directly on your *Saviour's Command*, who has required you not to swear *at all* by any creature, or with any of this kind of diminutive Oaths; *neither by heaven, nor earth, nor any other thing*. When you speak any thing *like* the name of G O D, and break out suddenly with a *Dod*, or *Gad*, or any such like expressions; "This is, says an elegant Writer, to deal with G O D himself as the Persecutors of Old did with his faithful servants, first to disguise them by putting on the skins or appearance of some beast, and then worry and tear them to pieces: So you first disguise the name of G O D, and then abuse it, and toss it about as profanely and wickedly as others, and so destroy the honour and reverence due to it."

BESIDES; your practising this kind of oaths for a while, will by degrees lead you to *others*, and greater. Or if it should not be so, yet you would do well to consider, that a thousand lesser holes may sink a ship, as well as a few greater leaks; and you may be as effectually undone by multiplying what you call little and smaller oaths, as by more glaring Blasphemies and Profaneness. That is a very terrible passage, *Jerem. v. 7. How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy Children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no Gods*. Swearing by the Creatures is a branch of Idolatry, of which G O D says, *How shall I pardon thee?*

Obj. 6. ANOTHER plea that swearers urge for themselves is, that there is something in swearing that

that looks *genteel* and *bold*, and gives a man certain airs that make him *more taken notice of* than otherwise he would be. And there is something that looks *sneaking*, and exposes one to derision, to be afraid of an Oath, when in company with those that use themselves freely to it.

Ans. THIS plea is too weak to be owned, even by many of those that are influenced by it. This sort of swearers, the Honourable Mr. Boyle observes, “ are like some Savages that lurk in rocks “ or woods, with whom it is much more difficult “ to draw them out to a battle, than it is to gain “ a victory over them.” But what he adds upon this head is very just, “ That those persons must “ be thought strangely necessitous of meriting “ Qualities, that do so meanly by their *bad Qualities* court your good opinion of them.” ’Tis only those who want a due esteem for themselves, that will bestow it upon you, for your putting on such vain and sinful airs as the swearer does. That author adds here——“ But you think your oaths “ will make you taken for a *Gentleman*. You are “ mistaken, says he, there is too little *Epicurism* “ and *chargeableness* in this Vice to be affected to “ that Quality. This sin of swearing is so cheap “ and now grown so common, that I wonder (as “ he continues to write) our *Grandees* do not renounce it ; although not for the *Vice’s* sake, yet “ for the *Company’s* sake ;” when your most ignorant and despicable wretches are now become the most profligate swearers.

As for its shewing your *Courage*, and being a mark of *Valour* ; here again you are sadly deluded. The swearer may stab and ruin his own *Soul*, to shew how *bold* a man he is ; but it seems he has not boldness and courage enough to *resist* the *derision* and attacks of those, who may direct the artillery

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lery of *Scoffs* and *Oaths* against him. No ; though they make this monstrously rude and barbarous demand upon him, that for the pleasure and credit of *their acquaintance*, he should *break with Heaven*, and make a sacrifice of *himself*; yet he has not the courage to oppose them, or forsake their Company.

I WILL venture to lay down this as an undoubted maxim, that there is no *cowardice* so contemptible, as that which makes a man resign his *biggest interests*, and afraid to pursue the dictates of his *own conscience*. And there is no *courage* so great, and just, and reputable, as that which enables a man to *scorn* the *scorners* in the cause of God, and to *abhor* those who hate and despise that *worthy name* by which we are called ; in all this, bearing up against the greatest opposition that the *fear* of God may expose one to. The *Israelites* were wonderfully terrified at the *blackness* of the *Heavens*, and the *quaking* of the *Earth*, at Mount Sinai ; Thunder, and Lightning, and Smoak, then made them tremble : But in order to conquer all this, *Moses* instructs them in the *true fear* of God, see *Exod. xx. 20*. This is *courage* indeed, that will stand the shock of a dissolving world, when the Swearer with all his blustering airs, and profane appearance of Boldness, shall *call to rocks and mountains to fall upon him*, and to *bide him from the face of him that sits upon the throne*, and from the *wrath of the Lamb*. One realizing thought of such a day approaching, would for ever banish this plea of the swearer, that *Oaths upon some occasions look genteel and bold*, and *secure a man from derision*, and the like. He that is afraid or ashamed *now to own* and stand up for the honour of God and CHRIST *before men*, the Judge of Quick and Dead will be ashamed of him *before his Father*, and the *holy Angels* ; and will condemn him to those torments, which

which he has so vainly defied, or impiously called for, in damning himself and others.

Obj. 7. THERE is one plea more, that by this time I would hope such as are driven from the Pleas already answered, will make their last; and that this also they may be helped to overcome. Namely, a pretence that they would *never swear, if they could help it*; they desire to avoid this sin, and would very gladly leave it, but it appears a matter of insuperable *difficulty* to quit it, so, as to *abstain wholly* from it.

Ans. To this I reply, that if there be a true and thorough *willingness*, whatever difficulty there may be in breaking off from this sin, that difficulty is *half overcome*. And if the *Imagination* of difficulty can but be laid aside, the difficulty it *self* will in a great measure vanish. Mr. Boyle mentions an instance of his being instrumental to reclaim a *Gentleman* from this vice of swearing, “ though his vice “ was *little younger* than himself; and though he “ was a very *choleric* person; and though he had “ strong apprehensions, that his endeavours to quit “ this sin could not be successful; yet (says that “ Honourable Person) before one *fortnight* was expired, he obtained so visible a conquest over this “ stubborn Vice, that he had afterwards only those “ *relicks* of it to suppress, which might keep him “ from growing proud of so *sudden* a recovery.”

THERE is not so much difficulty in conquering an Evil Custom of *this kind*, as some *other Vices*, which *nature* may fall in with; and which *reason* and *interest* may be more able to plead for, and support. But were it ever so difficult, the *Grace* of God and his *help* could make it *easy* to us to conquer all. And if we are prevailingly disposed to leave any sin, and pray to God as we ought to do

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that he would enable us, we shall have no reason to complain that our ceasing to commit any Evil, is an *Impossibility*.

THERE are some Rules and Advices, that if carefully followed, will, through the blessing of God, deliver the most *accustom'd Swearer* from the power of this sin. This lead leads me to the

III^d GENERAL HEAD ; To lay down some *Directions for enabling those who are desirous so to do, to avoid and leave off this sin ; and also to direct others, how they are to deal with such.*

I. I SHALL offer some *Directions* to shew those who have been *accustom'd* to the sin of swearing, but are now desirous to *quit it*, how they may *avoid and leave it off*.——I shall not here use many words, in recommending the *Directions* I have to give, but I dare undertake for the success of them where they are carefully followed.

1. BE sure to take *shame* to your selves, and to *reproach* your selves with the *great sin and folly* you have been guilty of, in *profane swearing*. † Think what had become of you, if God had shot his *thunderbolts*, and struck you dead, when you were profaning his name, and despising his all-seeing Eye, and his almighty Arm. You must impress upon your minds a deep sense of the *Evil of this sin*, and earnestly implore forgiveness of God thro' CHRIST, and thus becoming *sorrowful and contrite* you may be led to forsake this sin. But *slight thoughts* of it, or a *hasty wish* that you could leave off swearing, will not do. Think upon the *Divine threatenings* against this sin : God will not *bolt those guilt-*

† See Boyle's *Directions* in his Book against Swearing.

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lest that commit it: he expects, that men should fear his glorious and fearful name, or otherwise he will severely punish them. See Deut. xixiii. 58, 59. The LORD will make their Plagues wonderful.

2. WATCH against an Impatient Temper, and all sudden and violent fits of anger. In order to this, you must watch against every thing that would inflame the Blood, and provoke to inordinate passions. Excessive Drinking must be avoided, if you would avoid passion and swearing; and Gaming must be avoided, which is commonly the occasion of high provocations, and dreadful oaths. And you must avoid those people as much as you can, that are dull and unapprehensive, or of a thwarting and contradicting spirit, till you can converse with them without being provok'd at them.

3. DON'T give way to a vain Spirit, and an affectation of appearing agreeable to the loose and profane part of the world. This has proved a fatal snare to many. Let the innocent and mild and humble temper, and way of conversing, for which our blessed LORD and his first and best followers were remarkable, be more your ambition to copy after; and don't be led, by the eager passions, or the sinful Expressions, and vain Airs of haughty and extravagant People.

4. DON'T use your selves to earnest Affirmations, and Protestations, lest hereby you should be led to think swearing a necessary thing. As I live; As I hope to be saved; As I am a Christian; I protest before God; and God that knows all things knows this and that. Don't make these expressions common and familiar: Don't think there is need of them. If people won't believe you without these, let them go in their unbelief.

5. SHUN the Company of customary swearers as much as you can. I have often wonder'd, how any man that loves and honours the name of God

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and of CHRIST, can bear to hear them profaned and ill treated, and yet make such as are guilty of this Profaneness his Intimates, and chosen Companions. One of our *Divines* observes of those that are civilized, and of some polite taste, yet if they live amongst a *Barbarous people*, they quickly lose the purity of their *own Language*, and have their speech corrupted with the *Barbarisms* that are continually sounding in their Ears; so they that live amongst constant *swearers*, will first lose their *horror* of this Vice, and then be apt to be *infected* with it and fall into it themselves. For this reason, I think even those who are *most free* from swearing, yet should not chuse to make such their *constant companions* as are addicted to this Vice, lest they should be infected by them. And I am sure those that would gain a Victory over themselves, who have lived in this sin, must *for a time* keep out of swearing Company.

6. WHENEVER you are *obliged to take any oath*, let it be done with *great fear and reverence*, and that will prevent and cure your trifling with oaths. The more you think of the awfulness of appealing to an all-seeing Almighty God, the more you will dread the thoughts of making such appeals upon low and trivial occasions.

7. IT were adviseable to *lay some penalty on your selves every time you swear or take God's name in vain*. The Laws of our Country make every oath, to be a forfeiture to the Poor: And if every swearer would lay such penalties upon *himself*, and not make the informations of *others* against him necessary, I am persuaded he would much sooner be cured of this Vice. Let the first *object* of *Charity* you meet with, have *that* from you after every Oath, which the *Magistrate* might exact if your offence was made known to him. The Poor are called God's *Receivers*; and therefore *Trespases* against

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against their LORDS are properly *owned*, in returning something to them. Not that any man is to think he *discharges* himself hereby of the *guilt* of swearing; but by this means he will keep upon his spirit the *remembrance* of his fault: And when he finds how much he is a *loser* by it, he may grow weary of it. Get some *prudent friend* also to be your monitor, and to put you in mind when you swear, and be sure to take their admonitions kindly.

8. You must resolve *at once* to forsake this Vice, and *break it off immediately, and entirely*. Every conviction that you proceed to sin against, will increase the *weight* of your Guilt, and it will give *strength* to sin. This is not a Vice to be *dallied with*, but to be suddenly, resolutely, and with greatest sincerity renounced and forsaken.

9. AND lastly, *constant and fervent Prayer will enable you to subdue this Vice*. If you pray to God in a serious and becoming manner, it will fix upon your Spirits such *awful thoughts* of God, that you will not be able to go and speak lightly and triflingly, much less *profanely* of that name, which you have been *calling upon*, and professedly paying your homage to: So that Prayer in some measure gives us the very thing we ask for. But then besides, it procures *special aids* from above, by which corruptions are conquered, and we are enabled to say that *no iniquity shall have dominion over us*. If you should not conquer this sin so soon as you may wish or expect, don't be discouraged, but still go on to pray against it, and to use the means before prescribed. Either Prayer will make you give over *sinning*, or Sin will make you give over *praying*. Let not Sin make you cease Prayer: But *pray always; pray, and faint not*; and you will find that *perseverance*

* See Boyle's Discourse against Swearing in the Directions.

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ring in Prayer will make you conquerors over this sin. I speak now only add some few hints to those who are not guilty of this sin themselves, so that they may be able to deal with, and carry it towards those that are guilty.

It is certainly the Duty of all of us to lament the abounding of this Iniquity, and earnestly to beg of God to direct Magistrates and others, to take those measures which may be proper for correcting and restraining it, that it may not prove our ruin. I am afraid that many of those oaths that are taken in a way of Trade, our Custom-House oaths, and many that are taken in Courts of Judgment, Attesting and Witnessing Oaths, and many that are taken by those that bear Office, and are put into Places of Trust and Power, with other kind of Oaths that might be mentioned, are all of them an occasion of great guilt to many. And I most heartily wish some ways could be found out to lessen the occasions of taking oaths, instead of multiplying them. But, surely, if magistrates expect any of these oaths should serve the purposes for which they are intended, there ought to be great care to preserve the sacredness of an oath, and not to allow of profane and customary swearing, when they are able to correct it.

Where any are guilty of this, let them see, by one means or another, that you are displeased and grieved for them. If they direct their discourse to you when they swear, tell them they have credit enough with you to be believed without swearing; and don't be ashamed or afraid to mention such things as those that have been laid before you on this subject, (one, or more of them) where-ever you have a convenient opportunity and time for it.

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L. 2. If the Swearer forgets that he really *lessens himself* in your esteem by his oaths: and let him know that the same he throws contempt upon, he owes the greatest reverence to, and you have the highest esteem and affection for in the world. If you can make no impressions either by words or actions upon the Swearer, while in his company, it may be proper, and in some cases it is your duty, to inform a *Justice of Peace* of his crime, that he may be reprov'd for his fault as the Law directs. In these cases every one must be left to his own prudence, but you must not think that a pretence of Prudence will always excuse your want of zeal for the honour of God, and the credit of good Laws. If you know not how to act in these cases, you would do well to join with some Society for Reformation, or at least to consult and advise with some of the members of such Societies, that you may proceed with safety and success. In this, the good of all Societies is evidently and greatly concerned.

AND according to the advice of a late excellent Bishop of *St. Asaph*, in a *Sermon* upon *Swearing*, printed in the year 1721, let these directions be observed — “ Don’t suffer any that depend upon you, “ and are under your care more immediately, to “ commit this sin without punishing them for it. “ Let not any of your children dare to swear without your anger, and immediate chastisement. “ You will save them hereby from much mischief here, and from God’s anger hereafter. Keep “ not a servant under your Roof that is guilty of “ this wicked practice: their labours will not be “ bless’d by God to you. Employ no workmen “ that will not do their business without swearing. Relieve no Poor that are guilty of thus “ dishonouring God. You would, (says the Bishop) in a little time see a great change and Reformation of Manners if you would take these “ courses;

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the courtiers and those who by your means are
claimed from these cursed habits, would let a
little time be very thankful to you, and bless God
for you."

Upon the whole, let us not content our selves
in barely complaining of the wickedness of the times,
but let us bestir our selves, and do all we can in our
respective places to mend the times, and the people
with whom we converse. And God grant that our
light may so shine before men, in all instances of Piety
both in Lip and Life, that others may thereby be ex-
cited to glorify our Father who is in Heaven.

To whom, with the Son, and Spirit of Grace
and Holiness, be all Reverence, Obedience,
and Praise, world without end. Amen.

F I N I S

"I am not under your more immediately, to
commit this his without punishing them for it.
Let not any of your officers dare to swear with
out your sanction, or without your challenge.
You will take care to keep much in order.
Here, and there, keep a good eye.
Not a word shall be said, but what is
this wicked world will not do without some
blame by God's blessing, to employ to the
that will not do without some blame without
ing. Believe me, that are guilty of this
dishonouring God. You would, (says the
Lord) in a little time for great change and re-
formation of Manners if you would take these
counsels."

